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ARTICLE VI.

THE PALI LANGUAGE FROM A BURMESE POINT OF VIEW.

BY REV. FRANCIS MASON, D.D.,
MISSIONARY IN FARTHER INDIA.

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THERE are two schools of Pali. One takes for its basis the Pali derived from the oldest Burmese manuscripts, and the other the language as it now exists in books and manuscripts in Ceylon, condemning everything as irregular which differs from Singalese standards.

The Pali books are said to have been introduced into Burmah A. D. 387, and they appear to have been preserved uninterruptedly to the present time; but preserved by frequent copying, for the palm-leaf, on which they are all written, is such a perishable material, that the oldest manuscripts are supposed by the natives I have consulted to be less than two hundred years old.

However it may have been in the early years of the introduction of the language, since Europeans entered the country, little attention has been paid to its cultivation. Still, it is a constant study in all the Burmese monasteries, and nearly every school-boy makes a beginning on Kachchayano's grammar, but few get beyond the first Book. The priest reputed to be the best Pali scholar in Toungoo told me that there was no priest in town, except himself, who had read more than the first three Books; and he was educated at Ava. I have not, however, found his knowledge very profound, although he can repeat Pali in long reaches with marvellous rapidity. When I point out to him a grammatical discrepancy in different manuscripts, his only reply is: "That is not the way I learned it."

Bishop Bigandet writes of the priests: * "Unacquainted with the rules of grammar, the teachers are incapable of imparting any sound knowledge of the vernacular language to their numerous pupils." This is not quite just to the priests.

* Life of Gaudama, p. 522.

All know Pali grammar in part, and there is a little work in the monasteries, written in the vernacular, which gives a very fair elementary view of both Pali and Burmese grammar side by side; and which any Burmese boy of ordinary capacity can easily master.*

The Burmese Pali manuscripts certainly abound in clerical errors; yet, by a careful comparison of independent copies from different localities, a text something like the one originally brought to the country may be supposed to be obtained.

In Siam, the Pali language is studied much more than in Burmah. Annual examinations are held by the king in Bangkok, and prizes awarded to the best original compositions written in the language. It is a *quasi* university examination, and giving the prizes represents the conferring of degrees. This extensive cultivation of the language, however, has not had a very good effect on retaining the precise forms and language of the old manuscripts.

E. Kuhn has printed the text of Kachchayano's *Kāraka*, or the Book on Syntax; and, as compared with the Burmese text, it appears like an attempt at an improved edition. Marks of elision are introduced, which must be a modern innovation or derived from the Sanskrit. They are not found in either Burmese or Singalese manuscripts. An additional aphorism has been interpolated, which has nothing corresponding to it in Burmah or Ceylon. There are nearly two hundred different readings, of which twenty-one are words or clauses in Siamese not found in the Burmese manuscripts, and twenty-seven are words or clauses not in the Siamese but found in the Burmese text. There are also numerous transpositions.

Pali is studied by the scholars of Ceylon "almost as their native tongue;" † "Kings and princes have encouraged its study; nobles and statesmen have vied with each other to excel in its composition; and its laymen and priests have produced some of our most elegant works." ‡

Nevertheless, Ceylon has been dependent for the last two centuries on Burmah for the best Pali manuscripts. This is proved by the concessions of Ceylonese scholars themselves. The Honorable George Turnour was the most distinguished of European Pali scholars when he wrote his principal work, which was the translation from the Pali of the *Mahāwanso*, the early history of Ceylon; and it was from Burmese manuscripts that he corrected his text.

* For example, the book commences thus: "According to Kachchayano, there are 41 letters; according to Moggalayano, there are 43; according to the Burmese language, there are 46; and according to the Sanskrit, there are 51."

† Clough's Pali Grammar, p. vi. [?]

‡ D'Alwis's Pali Grammar, p. i.

He wrote: "It is from George Nadoris, modliar, that I received the Burmese version of the Tîkâ of the Mahâwanso, which enabled me to rectify extensive imperfections in the copy previously obtained from the ancient temple at Mulgiri-galla, near Tangalle."*

Again, the Singalese had the name of a more ancient historical work, called the Dipawanso; but, not being able to find it, Turnour thought that it never had any real existence, and was only another name for the Mahawanso; but he was convinced of his error by finding the work in a Burmese manuscript. "Some time ago," continues Turnour, "the modliar suggested to me that I was wrong in supposing the Mahâwanso and Dipawanso to be the same work, as he thought he had brought the Dîpawanso himself from Burmah. I was skeptical. In my last visit, however, to Colombo, he produced the book, with an air of triumph. His triumph could not exceed my delight."

"Asoka, grandson of Chandragupta, the identification of whose name with the Sandrocottus, mentioned by Greek writers as the most powerful king in India after Alexander's death, gave the first certain chronology to Indian history."† This identification was made from the Burmese manuscript of the Dipawanso to which reference is made above; and Prinsep wrote: "Mr. Turnour has thus most satisfactorily cleared up a difficulty that might long have proved a stumbling-block to the learned against the reception of these Lât inscriptions as genuine monuments of a fixed and classical period, the most ancient yet achieved in such an unequivocal form."‡ And this most valuable of identifications in Indian history, now universally accepted, rests entirely, it should be understood, to this day, on Burmese Pali manuscripts of Ceylonese history, no longer extant in Singalese Pali.

Again, Kachchayano's Pali Grammar was supposed to be lost until its existence was reported from Burmah, where, while European and Ceylonese Pali scholars were writing it down *non est*, it was found in every library, and was being taught and had been taught from time immemorial in every monastery.

And we have the best of evidence that most of the Buddhist books now in Ceylon are made from Burmese manuscripts, because the original Pali manuscripts in Ceylon were destroyed by Brahmanical rulers. "In the several Soléan and Pândian conquests of this island," wrote Turnour, "the literary annals of Ceylon were extensively and intentionally destroyed. The savage Rajasingha in particular, who reigned between A. D.

* Journal A. S. Bengal, Dec. 1837, p. 1054.

† Saturday Review, April 2, 1870.

‡ Journal of A. S. Bengal, September 1837, p. 791, compared with the same, December 1837, p. 1055.

1581 and 1592, and became a convert from the Buddhistical to the Brahmanical faith, industriously sought out every Buddhistical work he could find, and 'delighted in burning them in heaps as high as a cocoa-nut tree.'* He did his work so thoroughly that, when the Buddhists recovered the government, they had to send to Burmah and Siam for copies of their lost books. "These losses," continued Turnour, "were in a great measure repaired by the embassy to Siam of Wilbagadere Mudiyanse in the reign of Kirtisri Rajasingha in A. D. 1753, when he brought back Burmese versions of most of the Pali sacred books. . . . The last mission of this character was conducted by the chief priest of the Challia or cinnamon caste of the maritime provinces, then called Kapagama thero. He returned in 1812 with a valuable library comprising also some historical and philological works."† It would appear from this that many of the recovered books were not original works, but "Burmese versions," which have probably been re-translated into Pali by the Ceylonese priests.

With these undeniable facts before him, proved by the most unexceptionable of witnesses, it is something marvellous to find a scholar like Max Müller not alluding to Burmese Pali manuscripts in his letter to Lord Granville of March 21, 1870. He therein recommends that ancient Sanskrit and Pali manuscripts shall be carefully searched for all over India, but for Pali is content with what can be obtained from Ceylon.

Many years ago, I recommended Government to make a collection of Pali manuscripts in Burmah, but no steps have been taken in the matter to this day, and the English ministry have been misled with the idea that, Ceylon being the seat of Buddhism, manuscripts from Farther India should be ignored; just as if we should look altogether to Palestine for manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments, because Palestine was the original seat of Judaism and Christianity.

D'Alwis, a native of Ceylon, and perhaps the best Pali scholar on the island, testifies to the fact that Pali has been Sanskritized there in modern times. He writes: "Some modern writers on Pali grammar follow in their illustrations the principles of Sanskrit grammar; e.g. the eight conjugations of Pali verbs are classed by Moggallayana differently from Kachchayana; and the classification by the former seems to be nearly in accordance with that adopted by Sanskrit writers. He also, like Vararuchi, refers the student in certain parts of his grammar 'to the Sanskrit' for the application of 'that which has been omitted' [which Kachchayano never does]. But it is very remarkable that, the older the gramma-

* Journal A. S. Bengal, December 1837, p. 1054.

† Ibid.

rian, the less he has identified the Pali with the Sanskrit; Kachchayana is certainly one of the latter class. This indicates clearly that he, at least, did not regard the Pali as an emanation of the Sanskrit. It is also clear from the whole tenor of his work that he wished to treat the Pali as a dialect distinct from the Sanskrit.* "The Pali, after it found a retreat in Ceylon, degenerated from the form in which we find it in Kachchayana and Dhammapada."† Again, he refers to "important facts, which prove that the grammar in question was composed in the golden age of the Pali literature, before it became interlarded with the Sanskrit."‡

A difference between Ceylonese and Burmese Pali has long been recognized. D. Buchanan, who accompanied Symes's embassy to Ava in 1795, wrote that he was told by "a native of Taway" that "there was a great difference between the Pali of Ceylon and that of the Burmese Empire."§ And James Prinsep, Secretary of the Bengal Asiatic Society, recognized a difference incidentally, as if it were an acknowledged fact. "In the language of the pillars," he wrote, "the same preposition is always written *paṭi*, with the cerebral *t*. The orthography varies in the written Pali of books, being in Ceylonese *paṭi*, in Burmese *pati*."||

In Clough's Pali Grammar there are two characters or signs of Sanskrit origin, not found in Burmese Pali. One of them is "a substitute for *r*, placed on the top of the consonant, and must be pronounced before it, as in the syllables *ar-ka*; . . . but this is a combination seldom occurring in Pali."¶ It occurs, however, again on page 96, in the word *bhāvarta*, and also on page 121, in *svārta*, where in Burmese we have *bhavatta* and *svatta*. A similar character is used in Sanskrit.

"Although no Pali word," continues Clough, "terminates in a silent consonant, yet in dividing such words as contain a compound one, the first part may be so terminated, which is done by placing a sign [which is given] on the top of the silent letter."** No such sign exists in Burmese Pali, but there is a corresponding one in Sanskrit, placed at the foot of the letter, and called *virāma*.

That some changes had come over the language after Kachchayana wrote, and before Moggallayana compiled the Balavatara in the twelfth century, is undeniable from a comparison of the two grammars.

Kachchayana says there are forty-one letters, but the Balavatara says there are forty-three, adding two short vowels.††

* D'Alwis's Introduction to Kachchayana, p. xlv. † Ibid., p. xxxix. ‡ Ibid., p. xxx.

§ See Clough's Grammar, p. vii. [?] || Journ. A. S. Bengal, March, 1838, p. 278.

¶ Clough's Pali Grammar, p. 4. ** Ibid., p. 8. †† D'Alwis, p. xvii.

Kachchayano divides his grammar into eight Books, but the Balavatara has only seven, the one on Uṇādi affixes being omitted altogether.

The arrangement of the Books is different. Syntax is the third Book in Kachchayano, while it is the seventh or last in the Balavatara.

There are some differences in the forms of declension. Clough declines *mātu*, 'a mother,' in the singular number on the model of the second declension, making the instrumental, dative, genitive, and ablative *mātuyā*;* but no such forms are given by Kachchayano.

In the Balavatara, present participles are "classed with nouns in *a*,"† but in Kachchayano they are simply classed in the declension *ntu*, changed to *an* in the nominative singular sometimes, and the rest of the cases like the declension *ntu*.‡

The Balavatara teaches that the pronouns *no* and *vo* are used only in the accusative, dative, and genitive cases, in accordance with Sanskrit usage;§ but Kachchayano shows that they are also used in the instrumental and nominative cases. Thus, Aphorism 151: *bahuvachanesu vo no*, 'In the plural, *vo*, *no*.' The exposition specifies the instrumental case, with examples, and proceeds to add: *bahuvachanaggahane yomhi pathame vo no ādesā honti*, 'By taking the plural number, for the nominative, *vo*, *no* are substituted;' *gaman vo gachchheyyātha*, 'You may go the village;' *gaman no gachchhayama*, 'We may go to the village.'

The language of Kachchayano's Grammar is nearer that of Asoka's rock-cut inscriptions than the language of modern Ceylonese Pali. Thus, on the second tablet at Girnar, the word *chikīchhā* occurs three times. Prof. Wilson wrote: "The term *chikīchhā* is said by Mr. Prinsep to be the Pali form of *chikīṣa*, the application of remedies; but in fact the Pali form as it appears in vocabularies is *tikichha* or *tikichichhā*. The word is more probably the Prakrit form of *chikīrshā*, the wish or will to do; and the edict in fact announces that it has been the twofold intention of the Raja to provide not physic, but food, water, and shade for animals and men."

When Prof. Wilson wrote, Clough's Vocabulary, compiled by Moggallayano in the twelfth century, was the best authority to which he could refer; but the entire text of Kachchayano's Grammar is now before the public, and the 462d Aphorism, treating on reduplication, reads, *kavaggassa chavaggo*, 'the

* Clough's Grammar, p. 42. † Ibid., p. 22.

‡ See Aphorism 186: *simhi gachchhantādinanta saddo an*, 'in the nominative case singular, *gachchhanta* and its class make *anta*, *an*;' Aphorism 187: *sesesu ntu va*, 'In the rest of the cases, as *ntu*.' § Clough's Grammar, p. 62.

cha-class for the *ka*-class,' and among the examples he has *chikichchhati*, 'He affords medical aid, or practices medicine.' And this change of a single letter makes the interpretation of the whole edict altogether different from that given by Prof. Wilson.

It is common in Burmese Pali manuscripts to find the surd classified letters, *tenues*, exchanged for the sonant, *medix*, and precisely the same usage is found in the inscriptions. *Vice versa*, the *medix* are exchanged for the *tenues*, and there is a mutual interchange of nasals. So also there is often an indiscriminate interchange of the dentals and cerebrals.

The irregularities of the Burmese manuscripts exhibit then the mode in which the language was written three centuries before our era, and probably represent substantially the manuscripts that were first introduced into Burmah. The greater accuracy and precision in writing the language by the Singalese is due to a higher literary culture; just as the Greek now written by students at Oxford excels in orthography the Greek of old inscriptions.

In the early ages of all nations, writers were not critical, and, contented with ideas, were careless of forms. This is well illustrated in the Pali language by the well-known stanza of Assaji given as a synopsis of Buddhism. As found in various localities, it has been published in ten different forms, but the ideas conveyed are always the same, though there are such variations as making the verb 'to speak' sometimes from the root *brû*, and sometimes from the root *vacha*; putting the verb sometimes in the perfect tense, sometimes in the imperfect, and sometimes in the aorist.*

In the Burmese manuscripts, there is an eleventh form that has not yet been published, and which appears to me preferable to all others, because the metre is perfect, while the others contain a redundant syllable.

"The lines, which are in the common sloka or anushtubh metre of sixteen syllables," says Prof. Dowson, † are complete without the verb, and the metre is destroyed by its introduction; hence it is impossible not to suspect that the verb has been added subsequently to the composition of the verse. . . . If the word 'cause' was originally in the nominative case (*hetuh* or *hetus*), and without a verb, the noun will naturally take the nominative case, and the line will have a different meaning, and signify: 'Of all sentient existence [or 'of all moral actions'] proceeding from cause, the Tathâgata (Adi Buddha) is the Cause.' In this form the dogma has frequently been met with by Mr. Hodgson,

* See Journal of R. A. Society, vol. xvi., part i., pp. 37-53; and Journal A. S. Bengal, vol. xxxiv., part i., plate 10.

† Journ. R. A. S., p. 53.

who has stated his opinion that no complementary verb is necessary. The redundancy of the verb as regards the metre, and the various forms in which it appears in the inscriptions, seem to settle the point conclusively in favor of his view."

The necessity for dropping out the verb and changing the case of the noun is a grave philological objection to this settlement, especially when the Burmese text requires no alteration whatever; and then, the sentiment derived from the changed text is at variance with the original doctrines of Buddhism. Buddhism does not represent the Buddha as the cause of existence, but as revealing what the causes are, and how to counteract them. He taught that the cause of all things is *dhamma*, 'law,' or the operation of causes.

The reading of the Burmese manuscripts proves that it is not the verb which is redundant and destroys the metre, but the pronoun *yo*. In the life of Gaudama, the verses read :

ye dhamma hetu pabhavā
tesan hetu tathagato
āha tesancha nirodho
evan vādi mahā samāno.

'Whatever laws are produced from cause,
 the cause of these Tathâgata
 has told; and the extinction of these,
 has the great Samana in like manner declared.'

Toungoo, August 1871.